

Boston — City Council

Cholera

17

CITY OF BOSTON.

By Authority of the City Council.

CITY COUNCIL, JUNE 20, 1832.

WHEREAS it appears that a highly malignant disease, called the Spasmodic or Asiatic Cholera, now prevails in some parts of this continent, and some apprehension is felt that it may eventually extend to this city—for the purpose therefore of preventing its introduction and of limiting its ravages, as far as the same can be accomplished by human means, it is by the City Council

Ordered, That the Mayor of the City, the President of the Common Council, four members of the Board of Aldermen, and six members of the Common Council shall constitute a Board of Commissioners of Health, with full powers to carry into execution all the authority vested in the City Council by the Laws of the Commonwealth and the ordinances of the city, relating to the internal health of the city.

Ordered, That the city be and the same hereby is divided into four parts to be called the Northern, Western, Southern and Middle Districts, the limits of which respectively, shall be the same as those already affixed to the same, by the Board of Aldermen;—and that there shall be a Board of sub-commissioners of Health, for each of said Districts, to consist of two members of the Board of Aldermen and of the twelve members of the Common Council representing said District; and it shall be the duty of said sub-commissioners, under the direction of said Board of Commissioners, to attend to the purifying and cleansing the streets, lanes, alleys, courts and places, and also the several buildings and the appurtenances in their respective districts, and to the removal of such causes of sickness as may exist therein.

Ordered, That said Commissioners of Health shall have full power to use any of the public buildings of the city, or procure any other buildings, for hospitals or other purposes connected with the objects of this order, as they may deem necessary, and to provide sufficient medical and other attendance for the sick, and to cause the removal of any person or persons from their place of residence to the hospitals aforesaid, or to any other place, if, in the opinion of said Commissioners, it is necessary for the health of said persons so removed, or of any other inhabitants of the city.

Ordered, That this order shall continue in force six months, unless sooner repealed.

Ordered, That for the purpose of carrying the provisions of this order into effect, there shall be appropriated the sum of **FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS**, and that the Committee of Finance be, and they are hereby authorized to borrow from time to time such sums as may be required for meeting the said appropriation, not exceeding in the whole said fifty thousand dollars.

IN COMMON COUNCIL, JUNE 20, 1832.

The foregoing preamble and orders having been twice read, were passed, by vote taken by yea and nay, thirty-six members voting in the affirmative, and none in the negative. The Mayor, the President of the Common Council, Aldermen Oliver, Binney, Ellis and Farnam, and Messrs. Wetmore, I. Parker, Hastings, Hallet, Flint and Dimmock, were then chosen on the part of the Common Council as Commissioners of Health. Sent up for concurrence.

JOHN P. BIGELOW, *President*.

IN THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN, JUNE 20, 1832.—Read, and on the question of concurring with the Common Council, and passing the same, the question was taken by yeas and nays, and decided in the affirmative—yeas six—nay one. And the above named Commissioners were appointed on the part of this Board in concurrence with the Common Council.

CHARLES WELLS, *Mayor*.

Commissioners of Health.

The Hon. Charles Wells, Mayor; Aldermen Oliver, Binney, Ellis and Farnam; John P. Bigelow, Esq. President of Common Council; Messrs. T. Wetmore, I. Parker, J. S. Hastings, G. Hallet, J. B. Flint and J.L. Dimmock.

Sub-Commissioners of Health.

Northern District—embracing Wards No. 1, 2 & 3.

Aldermen Henry J. Oliver and John B. M'Cleary.

Messrs. Simon W. Robinson, Charles French, John Center, Bill Richardson, Ephraim Milton, Daniel Dickinson, John B. Tremere, Larra Crane, James Clark, Asa Swallow, Samuel Chessman,

Middle District—embracing Wards No. 4, 8 & 9.

Aldermen Henry Farnam and William Tileston.

Messrs. John Rayner, Joseph Eveleth, Joshua B. Flint, George Hallet. John P. Bigelow, Jacob Amee, Edward G. Prescott, Edward H. Robbins, Thomas Minns, John L. Dimmock, Richard Hildreth, James Brown.

Western District—embracing Wards No. 5, 6 & 7.

Aldermen John Binney and James Bowdoin.

Messrs. Levi B. Haskell, Charles Leighton, William Parker, Eliphalet P. Hartshorn, Isaac Waters, Joseph S. Hastings, Jonathan Porter, Grenville T. Winthrop, Thomas Wetmore, Levi Bartlett, Henry Rice, Isaac Parker.

Southern District—embracing Wards No. 10, 11 & 12.

Aldermen Benjamin Russell and Jabez Ellis.

Messrs. Ebenezer Bailey, Josiah Pierce, John Collamore, Jr., Francis Brinley, Jr., Joseph Hay, John L. Phillips, Gilman Prichard, Henry W. Kinsman, Henry Hatch, Ebenezer Hayward, Thomas Hunting, Joseph Harris, Jr.

Report of the Commissioners of Health.

The *Board of Commissioners of Health* specially instituted by the City Council, under the apprehension that the cholera may appear in this city, and intrusted, for the time being, with the entire management of the Internal Health department of the city, assure their fellow citizens that they have entered on the duties to which this official relation calls them, under a deep sense of the responsibilities which it imposes, and with a determination to meet them by the immediate and vigorous prosecution of all such measures for the general health and security as their own best judgment, aided by the experience of other places, and the advice of learned medical counsellors, shall determine to be expedient under the circumstances of the case. And in order that these measures may be carried into thorough and successful operation, they earnestly solicit the prompt and continual co-operation of all the citizens in such manner, and in regard to such particulars as will be designated from time to time by the Board in their communications to the public.

With a view of preventing the appearance of the disease if possible, and of diminishing its prevalence and malignity in case we should fail to keep it at a distance, the Board request their fellow citizens to give immediate attention to the following directions.

1. Let every householder carefully inspect every part of his or her premises, in order to discover and remove any dirt or source of offensive exhalations which may be there—particularly let them examine their cellars, yards, stables, &c where putrid animal or vegetable substances are liable to be deposited—and having cleansed all such places thoroughly let them be sprinkled freely and frequently with a solution of chloride of lime, which, for such purposes, should be prepared in the proportion of 1 lb. of the chloride to one gallon of rain or aqueduct water. The walls of cellars and yards should also be lime-washed, and all wet or damp places should be made as dry as possible.

2. Let every citizen make immediate report in writing to the Sub-Commissioners of the District in which it may be situated, of any nuisance or source of disease he may discover, whether in the domains of the city, his neighbor's premises, or his own.

3 For personal security against the attack of the disease, we refer to the means of protection recommended by the Consulting Physicians, which have been published in the newspapers at length, and which are hereto annexed, but which are briefly as follows—observe a perfect temperance in living—avoid exposure to all debilitating causes, especially fear—abstain from spirituous liquors, which not only invite the disease by the indirect debility which they occasion, but render the system insusceptible of the most valuable medicinal agents employed in its cure—avoid as much as possible exposure to the night air, and crowded meetings in the evening—avoid all uncooked vegetables, salads, crude fruits and sour drinks. The food should be substantial and generous in quality, but simple and unirritating. It is not well to make any great and sudden change in diet or regimen just as the disease is expected; but let all begin to leave off bad habits immediately. Aqueduct water and rain water if tolerably pure, are better than that drawn from the wells. Let all observe their customary hours for labor, refreshment and sleep, and engage in all their usual innocent recreations and amusements.

4. We beg you to facilitate by every means in your power the domiciliary visitations of the Sub-Commissioners, which will be made frequently, and which, you will recollect, in order to be valuable must be searching, and sometimes perhaps even a little annoying.

By direction of the Board of Commissioners.

CHARLES WELLS, *Chairman.*

Physicians' Report.

The Consulting Physicians of the City of Boston, having been requested by the Mayor and Aldermen to prepare some instructions for the relief of persons attacked with the Asiatic Cholera, before Medical advice can be obtained, and also for the prevention of this Disease, report as follows:—

There are two forms of the Cholera, differing principally in degree: one excessively severe and sudden in its attack, the other comparatively mild. The former requires the immediate use of remedies; the latter may wait the attendance and advice of a physician.

The symptoms of the violent form are great coldness, dizziness, sickness of the stomach and vomiting: diarrhæ, small watery discharges, violent cramps in every part, and a livid color of the body.

The following remedies should be used directly when the symptom occur :

1st. Give for an adult 50 drops of laudanum in a wine-glass of hot brandy and water, equal parts of each ; and repeat it every fifteen minutes, until four doses have been taken, so as to give in the whole 200 drops ; if thrown up, repeat the laudanum in a teaspoon full of brandy.

2d. Apply bags of hot sand to every part of the body and limbs of the patient. Large woollen cloths wrung out of very hot water may be applied in the same way, provided they are kept from cooling.

3d. Make a poultice or paste of common mustard mixed in the same way as for ordinary use. Apply this hot over the whole surface of the bowels.

4th. Give an injection made with a gill of starch, arrowroot, or gruel, with one teaspoonful of laudanum in it.

Milder form of the Disease. This is often preceded by a looseness of the bowels and sickness of the stomach. When these symptoms come on, the patient should omit the use of solid food, and take as little as possible of any thing into the stomach. A proper nourishment in this state, is arrowroot or rice water. For drink, small quantities of pure water * or tea.

The patient should keep in bed. If the bowels have not been freely emptied, an even teaspoonful of powdered rhubarb may be given. This is to be followed by an injection, every four hours, of half a pint of flax-seed tea, with 20 drops of laudanum in each. The surface of the bowels should be blistered. If the patient is much exhausted, a teaspoonful of tinct. of cinnamon in half a wine-glass full of hot water, may be given, once in half an hour, for three or four times.

Means of Prevention. Cleanliness, domestic and personal, is of the first importance in the prevention of Cholera. Every house and shop, especially provision stalls, should be made clean and sweet. Out-houses should be freed from all offensive matter. Cellars, especially, should be cleared of putrid vegetables, ventilated, and thoroughly dried. Beds, and bed clothing should be daily exposed to currents of fresh air.

Personal cleanliness must be carefully attended to. Those who can do so, should, in hot weather, bathe in sea water two or three times a week, and others should wash the whole body with warm water and soap at least twice a week ; children should not be omitted in this process. As few individuals as possible, should live in the same room, and where a number are found together means for dividing and giving them more healthy lodgements should be provided at the public expense.

Crowded meetings, especially in the evening, should be avoided.

Food. In a disorder which effects the stomach and intestines, all attempts at prevention would be useless, without a most strict attention to food. A fact established by the experience of all Europe and Asia is that the "Cholera attacks the tippler" and makes him his first victim. A little excess, even in wine, exposes to the disease. Liquids of all kinds should be moderately used. The safest are common tea and teas made

of domestic herbs, taken warm. Acid drinks are pernicious. Cold water if pure, may be taken in moderate quantity, but when the weather is hot, and the thirst great, the mouth, the hands, and the face should be previously washed.

Excess of solid food is a sure preparation for the disease. The best articles of food are bread, eggs, fresh meat, fresh fish, rice, perfectly good and thorough boiled vegetables stand next, as potatoes, asparagus, etc. All uncooked vegetables, as sallads, are dangerous. Fruits, unless very fine, had better be avoided. Strawberries, taken by themselves, or with the addition of a little wine, are the least likely to do mischief. Pastry, preserves, pickles, scarcely need be mentioned as requiring a total prohibition.

All unusual fatigue and exercise; exposure to cold, wet, and to the night air, should be avoided. The dress should be carefully regulated according to the changes of temperature. Flannel next to the skin is universally recommended, and to those of a more delicate habit is indispensable.

What we have already said on the subject of ventilation, will make it sufficiently understood that we believe the pure air of the country to be more salutary during the hot season, than that of a large town. While, therefore, it is not indispensable to flee the City on the appearance of the Cholera, and while we doubt not it will pursue a different course from the yellow fever, and infect the country if it does the town, we should advise those who have the means of selecting their residence, to quit the frequented walks of men, and seek retirement and sequestration, during the prevalence of the epidemic.

Finally, we recommend a *good conscience* and a *fearless performance of duty*, as the best of all preservatives against this disorder. It is well known to physicians that the most timid are most frequently the subjects of epidemic diseases. This is peculiarly the case with Cholera, because it effects the nervous system. We therefore strongly urge on our fellow citizens a perfect confidence in the wisdom and goodness of God, and a full assurance that those who perform His will by the devotion of their labours to the sick and suffering, are taking the surest means to escape the attack of this disease.

Signed,

JOHN C. WARREN,
BENJAMIN SHURTLEFF,
GEORGE C. SHATTUCK,
GEORGE HAYWARD,
JOHN RANDALL.

* This article is with difficulty obtained in this place. The water of the Aqueduct is to be preferred unless perfectly sweet rain water is to be had.

The following places have been designated as the places of meeting for the Several District Committees of the Sub-Commissioners of Health; at which places some of the Sub-Commissioners may be found at all business hours, where complaints of the existence of any filth or nuisance may be lodged, and where sufficient supplies of Quick Lime and Chloride of Lime, furnished at the expense of the City, may be obtained by the Citizens, for the purification of their premises.

For the Northern District, comprising Wards No. 1, 2 & 3.—The Ward Room in Ward No. 2, under the Hancock School House, Hanover Street.

For the Western District, comprising Wards No. 5, 6 & 7.—The Room under the Bowdoin School House, in Derne Street.

For the Middle District, comprising Wards No. 4, 8 & 9.—The Chamber of the Common Council.

For the Southern District, comprising Wards No. 10, 11 & 12.—The Ward Room, in Ward No. 11, in the Old Franklin School House, Tremont Street.

By order of the Commissioners of Health.

WILLIAM HAYDEN, JR. *Secretary.*

June 21, 1832.